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Spy Says Russia Got Navy Secrets From a Foot-High Stack of Papers

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SAN FRANCISCO, April 30 — John A. Walker Jr. testified today that he and a Navy colleague provided the Soviet Union with military secrets gathered from a nearly foot-high stack of classified documents aboard the aircraft carrier Enterprise.

In his third day of testimony at the espionage trial of the former Navy colleague, Jerry A. Whitworth, Mr. Walker said that Soviet agents had been given photographs of the documents, which contained nearly a year's worth of secret Navy messages passed aboard the Enterprise in the early 1980's. Mr. Whitworth was then working aboard the ship as a communications specialist.

"It was close to a foot in height," Mr. Walker said with obvious satisfaction. "A year's worth of secret messages."

It was the first time that Mr. Walker had publicly discussed the wide variety of secret documents taken from the Enterprise.

Mr. Walker, a confessed spy for the Soviet Union, is the Government's star witness against Mr. Whitworth, who has pleaded not guilty. Mr. Walker said he helped plan Mr. Whitworth's naval career, directing him to obtain posts that would permit the widest access to information about Navy secret codes and coding machines.

He said Mr. Whitworth's career became a focus of conversations with Soviet agents in face-to-face meetings in Vienna. "Whitworth's change of duty status was of prime importance, of course," Mr. Walker said. "His career plans were of utmost importance."

Mr. Walker said that Mr. Whitworth sought a post at sea because it might offer new sources of classified material.

"Mr. Whitworth stated the need to try to get a sea-going command that would permit him access," Mr. Walker said. "I considered that good."

Mr. Walker said that his Soviet contacts were pleased by Mr. Whitworth's 1982 transfer from a command center at Alameda Naval Air Station in California to the Enterprise. According to Mr. Walker, a Soviet agent said, "The move to the U.S.S. Enterprise was beneficial and should be beneficial."

Mr. Walker has not said when Mr. Whitworth supposedly learned that he had been working for the Soviet Union. Earlier this week, Mr. Walker acknowledged that he first told Mr. Whitworth that Israel or another allied nation might be buying the Navy material.

What Mr. Whitworth knew of Soviet involvement is critical, because the Government must prove he passed information with the intention that it be provided to the Soviet Union.

Under questioning by William S. Farmer, an assistant United States Attorney, Mr. Walker disclosed new details of the espionage methods used in meetings in Vienna with Soviet agents.

He noted that Soviet agents at one point asked him to stop staying at the city's Hilton and Intercontinental Hotels. "They were concerned with the records kept by U.S. hotels, that the lists of the guests could be easily obtained by American authorities," he said.

He agreed to switch to an Austrian hotel, the Regina, but later switched back. He spoke no German at a German-speaking hotel, which made him stand out, he said. "I was obviously not blending into the background, which is an essential element of being a spy."